

# Reinventing the Safety Net

AN INITIATIVE OF THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Revised September 2013

## QUICK FACTS:

### Expected Project Launch Dates

South Phoenix: October 2013  
Tucson & Prescott Valley: 2014

### Number of Participants

Approximately 1,000 participants will be engaged over time

### Who are the Participants?

The Demonstration Project will initially engage Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients at time of renewal

### Locations:

South Phoenix, Tucson and Prescott Valley



[www.azdes.gov/transformation](http://www.azdes.gov/transformation)

### *Goal: Empowering the Consumer to Move Beyond the Need for Public Assistance*

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) is leading a comprehensive initiative to reinvent the safety net system. The objective of this initiative is to transform Arizona's safety net from a system that focuses on the delivery of benefits, goods and services to one that will improve the consumer's quality of life by reducing their dependency. To create this new design, DES must overcome major flaws in the design and operation of the current system.

### *The Design Flaw - Defining the Problem*

The current safety net is not designed or intended to work together across programs to meet the needs of the consumer. Each program is designed to address just one issue, for example, hunger, disability or unemployment, in accordance with its own rules, regulations and funding. This has resulted in a system of disconnected, often conflicting, set of single-purpose programs.

### *The Operating Flaw - Fostering Dependency*

Safety net programs are often evaluated based on timeliness, accuracy and the number of individuals served, rather than measures that indicate whether the delivery of services helped the individual or family move beyond the circumstances that created their need for safety net supports in the first place. The ability to measure meaningful impact is further complicated when individuals and families are supported by more than one program. The concentration on programs without an equal focus on the promotion of independence allows individuals to remain dependent on public supports.

“ Our current safety net system, for the most part, principally measures the effective and efficient delivery of benefits, goods and services. Shouldn't we also measure whether or not our consumer's quality of life improved for receiving those benefits, goods or services? ”

- Clarence H. Carter  
DES Director

### *The Demonstration Project - Our Proposed Solution*

The Arizona Department of Economic Security believes that by establishing a holistic understanding of the needs of an individual or family, the safety net can help them to become more self-sufficient, thereby reducing dependency on public supports. Providing assistance to build on assets while addressing immediate needs and long-term barriers to self-sufficiency is essential. The Department will test this theory through a Demonstration Project involving individuals currently served by DES programs. Case Coordinators will work with each individual to conduct a comprehensive assessment, develop personalized goals and coordinate the appropriate resources and a plan for achievement. Through case coordination, DES hopes to help Arizonans in need of safety net supports will improve their quality of life and reduce their need for public supports in the future.